

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, September 26th, 2022



Debate on the affordability of medicines at the European Health Forum Gastein

Affordable Medicines Europe is bringing together key stakeholders and government representatives to debate how we can make medicines more affordable across the EU, at this year's European Health Forum Gastein.

As healthcare budgets become increasingly under pressure from a number of factors, not least the rising costs of pharmaceuticals have caused concern for healthcare payers and therefore attracted much attention from policymakers in a continent where access to universal health is the guiding principle. As the EU prepares for a thorough revision of the pharmaceutical legislation, the question is if and how the EU can deliver for healthcare payers and ultimately patients?

"We are in a situation, where healthcare in Europe is threatened by the increasing price of medicines. We are therefore bound to find ways to rein in the price development", says Kasper Ernest, Secretary General of Affordable Medicines Europe.

Among the stakeholders debating is the European Consumer Organisation, BEUC, who highlights the effects on patients if we do not act, and what solutions may be considered

"High prices for new medicines can make it difficult for consumers to access them. They also add pressure to already fragile public health budgets. To counter this difficult reality, solutions include greater transparency in pricing, revised intellectual property rules and faster access to generics", Anel. la Santos, Senior Health Policy Advisor, BEUC.

"We agree that for example price transparency is key to ensure more competition in the Internal Market, which can lead to lower prices", says Kasper Ernest.

In the panel are also government representatives, who are in the end responsible for the final policy measures taken – and for them the main question is how to achieve the right balance.

"Access to affordable medicines is essential for human health. At the same time, it is vital to strike the proper balance between availability and affordability of medicine on the one hand and innovation and the sector's global competitiveness on the other", says Dorte Bech Vizard, Deputy Permanent Secretary, Danish Ministry of Health.

Moderating the debate will be Mr Yannis Natsis, the Director of the European Social Insurance Platform (ESIP). Placed between policy makers and patients, they are responsible for balancing the budgets for healthcare across the continent. ESIP has called for more transparency, evidence and competition in its' comments to the revision of Europe's pharmaceutical legislation.

The debate around competition in Europe is mostly focused around how quickly generic medicines may enter the market after patent expiry, but Kasper Ernest concludes that,

"The development in prices cannot alone be addressed once products go off-patent. We are forced to look at how competition can be spurred while products are still on-patent".

Speakers

Moderator: Yannis Natsis, Director of the European Social Insurance Platform (ESIP)

Panellists: Ms Dorte Bech Vizard, the Deputy Permanent Secretary at the Danish Ministry of Health; Mr Rui Portugal, Deputy Director General of Health in Portugal; Ms Ancel.la Santos, Senior Health Policy Officer at the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC); and Mr Kasper Ernest, Secretary General of Affordable Medicines Europe.

The European Health Forum Gastein 2022

Since its foundation in 1998 the European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG) has developed into a key policy platform, bringing together politicians, senior decision-makers, community members, and experts in the field of health and beyond. This year's overarching theme is "*A moonshot for a true European Health Union, If not now, when?*". While taking the stock of the substantial accomplishments in public health over the last quarter century, the EHFG will discuss the challenges and policy options for action urgently needed across sectors, borders, and disciplines at this watershed moment for health.

Practical information

The event will take place on September 28 at 07h30-08h45, at the Hotel Des Alpenhaus, Bad Hofgastein, Austria.

The session will also be accessible online, upon registration for online participation via this [link](#).

For further information and updates, you can consult the official page of the session at this [link](#).

Contact

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